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EDITORIAL NOTES.

THE new education trails in its wake a procession of mourners. They are they who mourn because the children of today are less advanced in attainment, less efficient in training, and less tractable in mind than they were of yore. True or false as this may be, it seems that either with the aid of the schools, or in spite of them, humanity is wise in a larger number of things, it displays skill in wider fields, and it is sensitive to a greater diversity of influences than ever before. Education is a response to conditions; it justifies itself in the public demand. It hardly seems credible that the new education responds less well to the conditions of the new times than did the old to the conditions of other days.

The difference between the old and the new education is not merely one of degree; it is fundamentally a difference in kind. The old sought attainment, discipline, and docility of mind through the performance of tasks that were imposed from without. The new seeks the same ends through the growth of the initiative within.

Education is not a matter of tasks; and this is the pitfall that catches most of the critics who compare the old with the new. If education were the result of tasks arbitrarily imposed; and if the old set tasks for the pupils that were difficult enough to hold them to the top notch of effort; and if the new levied only those that were so easy that the pupils became dawdlers, then indeed should the mourners continue to mourn.

But here is the difference that is world-wide: the new, rejecting the idea of imposing tasks, seeks to establish conditions that challenge the personal initiative. The old, therefore, prized and measured attainment as a quantitative result; the new measures it alone by quality. The old recognized as training and discipline the so-called voluntary attention which seemed to be mainly the ability to stare, ox-like, a disagreeable, uninteresting, or unintelligible thing out of countenance. The new believes in the training and discipline that come from the pupil's effort to follow up from premise to conclusion something that mightily interests him. The old found satisfaction in the state of mind that was quietly receptive; the new sees hope in the turbulence and unrest of alert inquiry. These are irreconcilable differences in kind.

The principles of the new education are frequently misunderstood, wrongly interpreted, and misapplied. The doctrine of personal initiative is sometimes overworked. Children occasionally initiate proceedings that, if pursued, would result in the eviction of their elders from under the parental roof. The privileges of the counter-initiative on the part of the old folk should always be recognized. The resultant of the two movements should be better mutual understanding and better adaptation.

He who demands the right of initiative in the household or community, be he old or young, must assume a definite responsibility for making it more pleasantly habitable. That is what the household or the community gets out of the deal. This cultivates that feeling of respect for the rights of others which, the mourners say, the new education does not properly inculcate. There is no conflict, therefore, between the freest play of the initiative and the most perfect form of governmental control, because the whole matter is placed at once upon the highest ethical grounds.

There are those who believe that the initiative is all there is to it; that the new education is the doctrine, literally, of **Initiative Not** endless beginnings! If it works out that way in practice, it is usually because the teacher is a kind of pedagogical kangaroo. The true initiative is the reaction to a clearly discerned purpose. The attainment of the end, the completion of the work, is the final test by which we determine the sanity and educational worth of the initiative.

The keynote of the new education is *motive*; to establish and maintain the natural conditions which will enable the pupil to realize it, is the sole function of the teacher and all the machinery of the school. Purpose is derived from a recognized need; the new education measures its depth by the quality of the supply furnished by the pupil. The initiative involves responsibility for the result. The new education grants the freedom of the initiative to the child, but it places at the same time the responsibility of deepening his appreciation of the importance of the end upon the teacher and the parent.

The ultimate product of the new education is *a responsible human being*. This is indeed the highest result of all education — new or old — and there never has been any true education which did not end in such a goal. Here is the weak spot in that duplex educational machine of today, the school and the home. Both school and home often seem bent upon shielding the child from responsibility, instead of placing him under those natural conditions which tend to develop it. There are girls in the grammar grades — thousands of them — who, did occasion demand, could step into the center of a household and organize and manage it; there are boys in the grammar grades — thousands of them — that, were it actually necessary, could go right out into the teeth of the world and support their mother and rejoice in doing it. Such demands would, indeed, be too severe. Heaven forbid that childhood and youth should be worn thread-

bare by those grinding exactions that often come to them because of the irresponsibilities or misfortunes of others. But between this extreme and the other, where they do not have any responsibility, there is an infinite distance. From the day when the little toddler neatly folds and lays away in her toy bureau the dress of her doll until she takes the helm of an establishment of her own, both she and her brother should be actual participants in due proportion in the thoughts and the work of the household and community. It is not necessary, it is not even right, that these responsibilities should be heavy; but it is absolutely essential that they should be real. *They must be worth something*; they must stand for something, not only for ends that lie within the children themselves; they must count for something also toward the joy, the happiness, and the welfare of others. This is the heart of the new education. Let the mourners be comforted.

W. S. J.